1980

CIDAC TL6728
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ACFOA DEVELOPMENT DOSSIER 1

Editor this issue: *Pat Walsh*
Layout and design: *Gay Woods and Pat Walsh*
Original drawings: *Chris Murphy*
Typesetting: *Alpha Typesetting & Art Service, Canberra*
Printing and circulation: *ACFOA*

Development Dossier incorporates *Development News Digest* which has now ceased publication.

Development Dossier is published four times a year and provides an in-depth treatment of one topic or theme per issue to make up a document of ready reference value.

The dossier is directed at voluntary aid agencies, Parliamentarians, people in government, universities, schools and members of development action and community groups.

Opinions expressed in DD are not necessarily those of the Australian Council for Overseas Aid or its member agencies.

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Registered for posting as a Periodical – Category B

ISSN 0155-0489

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Glossary of Terms

ACFOA – Australian Council for Overseas Aid
APODETI – Popular Democratic Association of Timorese
CRS – Catholic Relief Services
DRET – Democratic Republic of East Timor
FRETILIN – Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor
ICRC – International Committee of the Red Cross
IDEC – International Disaster Emergencies Committee
IRC – Indonesian Red Cross
NGO – Non-Government Organisation
RAFT – Campaign to Reunite in Australia the Families of Timorese
UDT – Timorese Democratic Union

Editorial

by Pat Walsh

Because East Timor is only rarely mentioned in the Australian media, many wrongly assume it is no longer an issue that requires attention. Nothing could be further from the truth.

This first edition of *Development Dossier* aims to correct this false impression by identifying and backgrounding some of the problems affecting the East Timorese people inside and outside East Timor. It is particularly directed to all who subscribe to the sacredness of human rights. Even a cursory reading of this Dossier will show that the situation of the Timorese demands that action for justice must be escalated not wound down.

This Dossier will be scrutinised, and rightly so, for unhealthy bias, error and omission. The conspicuous omission is the lack of an in-depth coverage of the key issue, namely, the military and political situation inside Timor today. Indonesia's systematic exclusion of independent observers from East Timor, which in itself suggests that an abnormal situation prevails there which Indonesia prefers the world did not know about, is responsible for this. The evidence that is available, however, strongly suggests that the situation is far from resolved, that the Timorese continue to offer significant military and attitudinal resistance to the Indonesian occupation. As a recent Church report expressed it: "The people are not co-operative, not reconciliatory". Overseas Timorese concur and continue to press the case for the right of self-determination of Timor where, unlike Zimbabwe, it has never been exercised.

The bias in this Dossier is readily discernable. Its perspective is that of the East Timorese people. Their needs and aspirations are the principal reference point even though this means the exclusion of other reference points based on less worthy considerations.

The needs of the East Timorese are clearly peace, justice and economic development. The reality is one-sixth to one-third of the population dead or missing, massive displacement of the people, the destruction of the economy, abuses of human rights, separation of families, a severely traumatised and demoralised people, and aid hand-outs.

It is indisputable that the cause of this profound destabilisation of East Timor has been the violence of Indonesia's forced integration. As the International Red Cross put it after their July 1979 survey: "military operations" are responsible for the displacement of people and their Biafra like condition. Plainly the East Timorese have not benefited from integration. It has meant oppression not liberation, misery not hope. As a letter sent from Timor in April this year put it: "A discontent which is difficult to explain now reigns in Timor . . . we are oppressed to the very tips of the hair on our heads". Indonesia is not only in breach of international law and morality and the will of the Timorese; it has also, in plain language, made a terrible mess of things in Timor. It follows logically and inescapably that it should withdraw from the Territory for the sake of the Timorese.

From this perspective it is simply not enough to reduce the East Timor, internationally, to an aid problem. Nor is it enough for the ICRC inside Timor to dispense material aid without justice.

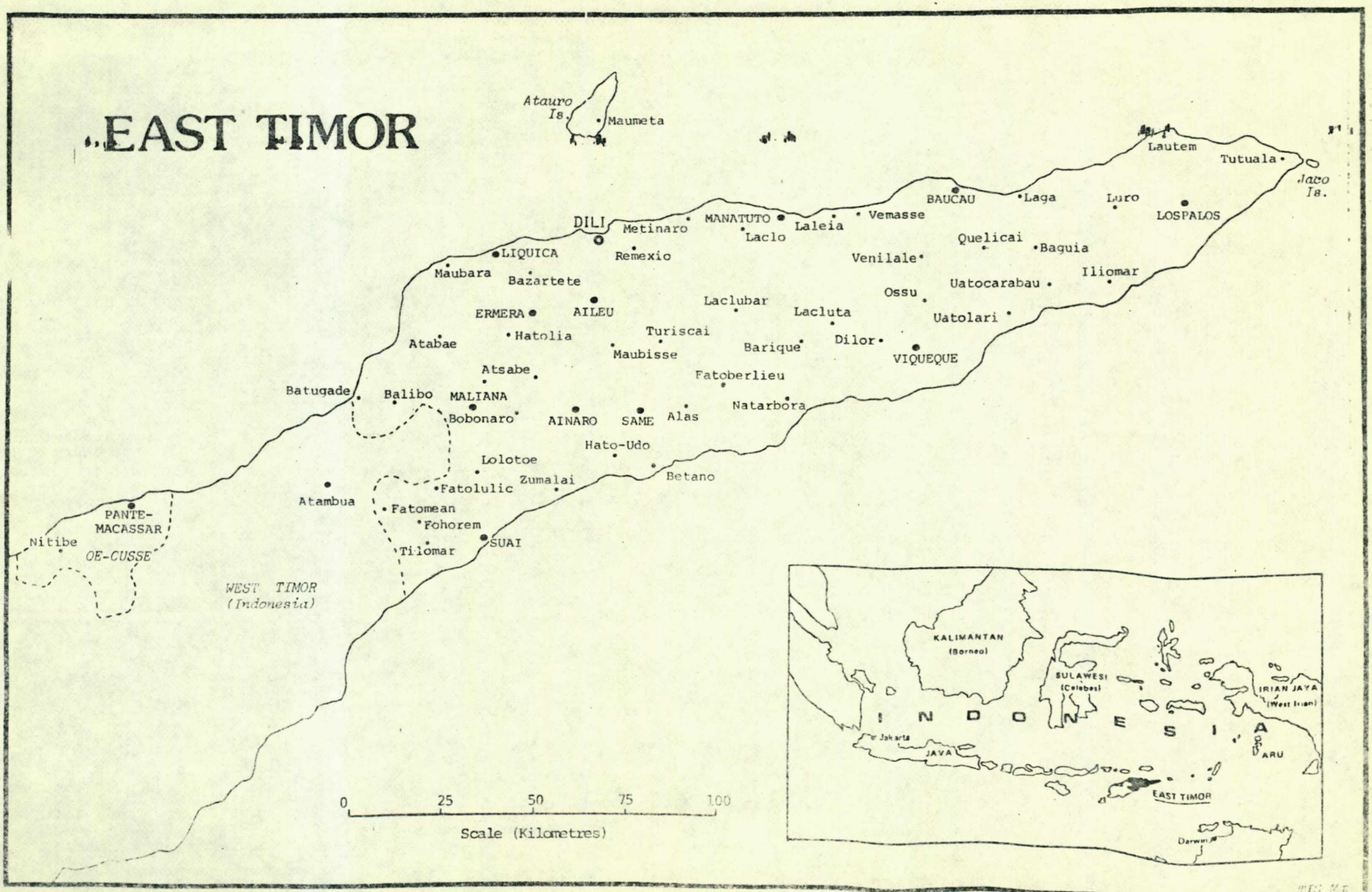
For its part the Catholic Relief Services program is highly ambiguous. The fact that CRS aid is coming through Indonesian channels and is being used for the maintenance of structures of oppression places the Timorese in a terrible dilemma. The aid is accepted with mixed feelings, for whilst survival dictates they must have it, at the same time it comes to them, on the ground, from the Indonesians whom they see as the murderers of their families and the destroyers of their ways and legitimate aspirations. As has been said in another context: "The sour fact is that much of what goes for aid is like a handshake with death. The death of freedom, of dignity, of self-respect and, ultimately, of the right to live".

Many will agree that the key to Timorese dignity and happiness is a properly supervised act of self-determination, the pre-requisite for which is Indonesia's withdrawal from East Timor. But they will reject the proposition as sheer idealism arguing that the Indonesian occupation makes it unrealisable. Overlooking its strenuous efforts to secure the release of the American hostages from Iran, the withdrawal of the Soviets from Afghanistan and Vietnam from Kampuchea, the Australian Government, for example, considers – for its own pragmatic reasons – that efforts to achieve self determination for East Timor are "pointless (and) incapable for practical implementation".

Such a stance subverts the widely applied principle of diplomatic and other non-violent activity as a means of realising change. It also flies in the face of history which clearly demonstrates, in the case of Indonesia itself and elsewhere, that international pressure for change does work.

There can be little doubt that Indonesia would be forced to reconsider its position if serious political and other forms of pressure were brought to bear. Are the 62 countries who voted against Indonesia at the UN doing more than putting their hands up for a vote once a year? What are the possibilities of more assertive action on the part of other Governments, the world aid agencies, the international Christian community – in particular the Vatican – not to mention the many concerned individuals and organisations in the West and within Indonesia itself?

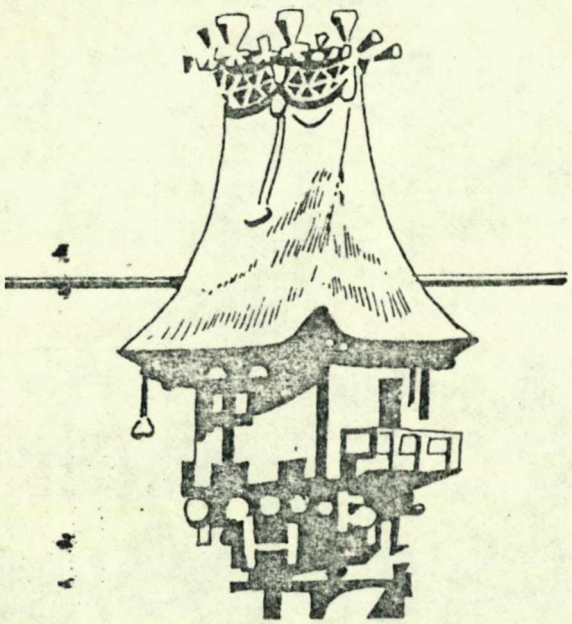
The right of the East Timorese to self-determination must remain the basic quest for it holds the key to the many problems affecting the Timorese addressed in this Dossier. In the meantime the struggle to reunite families and redress the other sub-issues must be writ-large on the agenda of the world's conscience. To these ends, it is to be hoped that the contents of this Dossier will be given the widest possible circulation and popularisation.


EAST TIMOR
Ataúro Is.
Maumeta
Lautem
Tutuala
Jaco Is.
BAUCAU
Laga
Luro
LOSPALOS
DILI
Metinaro
MANATUTO
Laleia
Vemasse
Laclo
Quelicai
Baguia
LIQUICA
Remexio
Venilale
Maubara
Bazartete
Iliomar
Uatocarabau
Ossu
Laclubar
ERMERA
AILEU
Lacluta
Uatolari
Turiscai
Atabae
Hatolia
Dilor
Barique
Maubisse
VIQUEQUE
Atsabe
Fatoberlieu
Batugade
Balibo
MALIANA
Natarbora
Bobonaro
AINARO
SAME
Alas
Hato-Udo
Lolotoe
Betano
Zumalai
Fatolulic
Atambua
Fatomean
Fohorem
PANTE-MACASSAR
Nitibe
OE-CUSSE
SUAI
Tilomar
WEST TIMOR (Indonesia)
0
25
50
75
100
Scale (Kilometres)
KALIMANTAN (Borneo)
SULAWESI (Celebes)
IRIAN JAYA (West Irian)
I N D O N E S I A
Jakarta
JAVA
ARU
EAST TIMOR
Darwin

East Timor at a glanc

GEOGRAPHY

Timor is a rugged, crocodile-shaped island of great beauty situated 350 miles NW of Darwin across the Timor Sea. It is the largest of the Lesser Sunda islands. East Timor comprises the eastern half of Timor, plus the off-shore islands of Ataúro and Jaco and the enclave of Oecusse in West Timor. It is comparable in size and population to Fiji. The 150 ml length of East Timor is dominated by tumbled mountains rising in places to 10,000 ft. The drier north coast is lined by swamps and cliffs, while the southern coast consists of an undulating plain which extends inland. The vegetation varies between savannah and rainforest. The climate is tropical with the usual hot, dry season with temperatures constant at 80-90°F and the monsoon when the rivers flood and the roads are unusable. Only one harvest is possible on the north coast, where the dry season is the longest in South-East Asia, but the November-June wet season on the south makes two harvests possible there. Erosion and deforestation are significant problems.



THE ECONOMY

East Timor, though potentially rich, has never been developed and consequently the country and the bulk of the people are poor. Pre-1975, most of the people survived on subsistence agriculture supplemented by food-gathering and hunting (deer, pig). Corn and rice were the staple crops, but tapioca, potatoes, peppers and pumpkins were also grown plus some citrus and tropical fruits. Slash and burn techniques were common and the soil was prepared with digging sticks or by trampling with water buffalo.

A small export and retail sector existed alongside this peasant economy. Coffee, and some rubber and tobacco were grown and exported. The Chinese and a small number of Portuguese dominated this sector. Only 200-300 shops were in the hands of the Timorese. The Portuguese 'escudo' served as the unit of currency. To a large proportion of the population the yearly tax was a crippling burden and the many who could not pay were forced to work it off, generally on the roads.

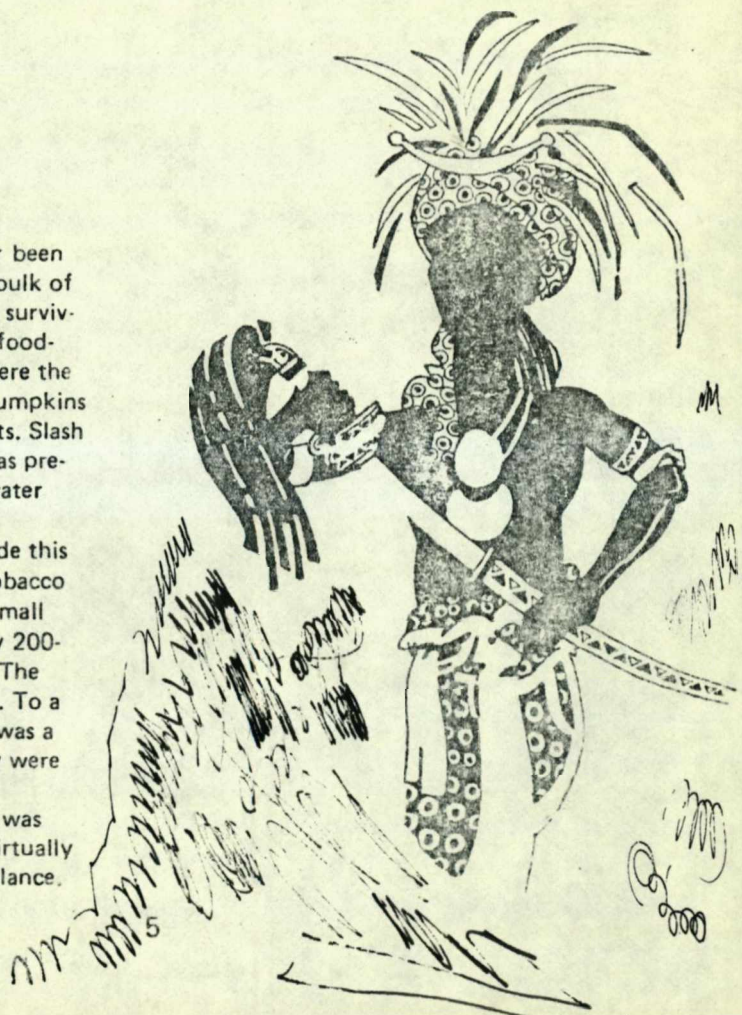
Generally speaking, agricultural production was extremely low despite its potential and industry virtually non-existent, contributing to a chronic trade imbalance.

THE PEOPLE

The population in 1974 before the civil war a Indonesian invasion was approximately 680,000. A proportion of these were concentrated in a band f either side of Dili, the capital, to the south coast, trasting with the sparsely-populated eastern region. but 16,000 of these were indigenous Timorese, the group consisting mainly of Chinese (10,000) and P ese. Most of the people were animist but there were some 200,000 Roman Catholics and small groups Protestants, Muslims and Confucianists. East Timo been a racial meeting-point populated by successive of migrants, predominantly Malay and Melanesian. migrations occurred many centuries ago so that a tinct Timorese culture existed well before Europe colonisation.

Portuguese, Arab, Chinese and African elements varying proportions and with varying impacts, have added since.

Traditional Timor was divided into small kingdo ruled by tribal chiefs or liurai. Of the 30 dialects spo in Timor, Tetum is the most widely used. Viability i necessarily dependent on size; some 30 UN memb states have populations of less than one million.



A Brief Chronological History of East Timor

1520	Portuguese traders arrive in Timor.
1702	Fifty years of rebellion against Portuguese rule.
1904	Dutch and Portuguese Governments finalise boundaries between East and West Timor.
1912	Large-scale rebellion against Portuguese rule.
1926	Salazar assumes power in Portugal.
1941	Australian troops despatched to neutral Timor to fight the Japanese.
1949	Indonesia (including West Timor) wins independence from the Netherlands.
1974, April	Military coup in Lisbon against Caetano regime; decolonisation process commenced; ASDT (later Fretilin), UDT and Apodeti parties form in East Timor.
1974, Sept.	Whitlam tells Suharto independent East Timor unviable and threat to regional security but should decide its own future.
1975, Jan.	UDT and Fretilin enter into a pro-independence coalition.
1975, August	UDT coup and civil war resulting in some 3000 deaths, the displacement of refugees to Australia and West Timor, and Fretilin victory.
1975, Sept.	International Red Cross and ACFOA work in Timor.
1975, October	Five Australian newsmen killed at Balibo during Indonesian incursions into East Timor.
1975, Nov. 28	Fretilin declares independence and proclaims the Democratic Republic of East Timor.
1975, Dec. 6	Ford and Kissinger complete visit to Jakarta.
1975, Dec. 7	Full-scale Indonesian invasion launched.
1975, Dec. 12	UN General Assembly (69-11) calls on Indonesia to withdraw from East Timor. Australia supports the resolution. US abstains.
1976, Jan.	UN Special Representative, Winspeare Guicciardi, is frustrated in his attempts to visit Fretilin-controlled areas of East Timor.
1976, April	Australia presses for ICRC to be re-admitted to Timor.
1976, May-July	Indonesian-conducted 'process of integration' of East Timor as 27th province of Indonesia is rejected by both Australia and US.
1976, Sept.	1400 refugees evacuated from West Timor to Portugal.
1976, Nov. 17	UN General Assembly (61-18) rejects Indonesian takeover of Timor.
1976, Nov. 19	Reports that widespread fighting continues in East Timor, that Fretilin controls 85 per cent of the territory, that 60,000 people have died.
1977, March	US Congressional Hearings hear allegations of Indonesian atrocities in East Timor from Jim Dunn.
1977, April	Timorese in Australia nominate 2668 relatives for admission from East Timor.
1977, Sept.	Xavier do Amaral replaced as President of DRET
1977, Dec. 1	UN General Assembly (68-20) calls on Indonesia to withdraw from East Timor.
1978, Jan.	Australia extends de facto recognition to Indonesia's takeover of East Timor.
1978, May	Reports of intensified fighting.
1978, Sept.	Foreign Ambassadors, shocked by visit to East Timor, call for urgent humanitarian aid.
1978, Dec. 3	Fretilin radio link with outside world ceases.
1978, Dec. 6	UN General Assembly asserts East Timor's right to self-determination.
1978, Dec. 31	Death of Nicolau Lobato, President of DRET.
1978, Xmas	First and only visit of Australian immigration team to Dili.
1979, Jan.	99 Timorese arrive in Australia from East Timor.
1979, Sept.	Conference of Non-Aligned Countries in Cuba supports right to independence of East Timor.
1979, Oct.	ICRC says humanitarian situation in East Timor "as bad as Biafra". ICRC and CRS commence 6-month emergency programs. Australian journalist, Peter Rodgers, smuggles out rare photos of suffering East Timorese.
1979, Nov.	UN General Assembly asserts East Timor's right to self-determination. Australian aid agencies and Australian Red Cross launch separate appeals for East Timor.
1980, Jan-April	Diplomatic and some military resistance to Indonesia continues. Family reunion program stalls. ICRC and CRS programs extended.

ACFOA Policy On East Timor 1975-1979

I Aid to East Timor

Aug 1975 Council calls for Australian Government (AG) to provide aid to East Timor (ET).

Oct 1975 ACFOA Timor Task Force visits ET.

Oct 1975 Timor Relief Appeal begun. $160,000 raised

Nov 1975 ACFOA barge arrives Dili. Indonesian invasion in December halts further shipments.

Dec 1975 Executive calls for ICRC and other agencies to be admitted to ET.

Apr 1976 Executive calls for ICRC and other agencies to be admitted to ET.

Oct 1976 Executive calls for aid agencies to be admitted to ET.

Feb 1977 Executive calls for UN, ICRC and other aid agencies to be admitted to ET.

Sep 1977 Council calls for aid agencies to be admitted to ET.

Jul 1979 Executive adopts AWD report *Aid and East Timor.*

Oct 1979 Council calls on AG to increase support to ICRC in ET, and to seek to broaden ICRC programme to include prisons, family reunion, tracing, and Geneva conventions. Calls for international assessment of situation in ET. Refers crisis in ET to IDEC.

II Independence and right to self-determination of East Timor

Aug 1975 Council calls on AG to uphold "principle of independence of choice of people of Portuguese East Timor" and to oppose external interference.

Dec 1975 Executive condemns Indonesian invasion; calls on AG to do likewise and to support UN efforts to uphold principle of independence.

Jul 1976 Executive calls on AG to reject Indonesian process of integration. States military aggression in defiance of UN charter and resolutions.

Oct 1976 Executive deplores continued Indonesian military intervention and resulting suffering. Calls on AG to support ET right to self-determination at UN. Calls on Portuguese Government to continue withholding recognition of integration.

Oct 1978 Council supports UN resolution of Nov 1977. Calls on AG not to grant 'de iure' recognition to takeover. Rejects military invasion as way of claiming new territory.

Oct 1979 Council directs Executive to publicise ET situation in Australia Calls on AG to cancel President Suharto's visit until human rights restored in ET.

III Military Aid to Indonesia

Dec 1975 Executive commends AG for suspending delivery of two Nomads to Indonesia. Calls for suspension of all military aid until Indonesia withdraws from ET.

Oct 1976 Executive calls on AG to cease any military aid to Indonesia usable in ET.

IV Family Reunions

Oct 1976 Executive calls on Indonesia to allow free reunion of ET families in place of their choice.

Jun 1976 Executive supports Timorese Association for Permanent Residence. Sends delegation to Foreign Affairs re family reunions.

Oct 1976 Council criticises AG for performance on family reunions.

Oct 1979 Council calls for AG Immigration Team to visit Dili and for AG to allow rest of 2668 nominated in 1977 to come.

V Refugees

Dec 1975 Executive calls on AG to help establish neutral zone in ET for refugees and relief distribution, and to bring refugees to Australia.

Feb 1977 Executive hears report from Jim Dunn of visit to camps in Portugal.

Oct 1978 Council calls on AG to grant "refugee status" to Timorese in Portugal and admit them to Australia. Calls on AG to relax criteria covering admission from ET because of war there. Calls on AG to pressurise Indonesia to permit free emigration from ET.

VI Miscellaneous

Aug 1975 Council calls on AG to re-open Consulate in Dili.

Oct 1976 Executive calls on AG to allow reasonable communication between ET and outside world.

VII Commission of Enquiry into East Timor

Jun 1977 Executive establishes three-person enquiry into East Timor situation, especially aid and refugees.

Sep 1977 Council advised Commission to comprise John Traill QC, Joyce Shewcroft, Major-General Paul Cullen (later replaced by Prof. Ken Rivett.

Feb 1978 Executive requests interim report.

Aug 1978 Executive approval for Commission to visit Darwin/Indonesia.

Oct 1978 Council requests final report and recommendations by end of 1978.

Mar 1979 Executive requires report within one month.

Jul 1979 Executive establishes July 31, 1979 as report deadline.

Oct 1979 Council requests Commission chairman to return documents to ACFOA for it to produce report.

Apr 1980 Final Commission report under discussion between ACFOA Timor sub-committee and Commissioners.

The NGO's and East Timor

by Helen Hi

Contrary to the expectations of some critics, Australian Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) -- with only one or two exceptions -- have not at any stage reduced East Timor to a simple aid problem. This article traces the unique, sometimes passionate, involvement of the NGOs in the broad struggle of the East Timorese for justice and proposes that the basis for this is not just geography but a 'correspondence of values'.

First contact and support

Indonesian troops have now been occupying the town of Dili for over four years and the whole territory of East Timor has been out of bounds for that time for all but a few specially selected journalists and international aid personnel. Most of the member agencies of ACFOA have been frustrated in their attempts to get aid programmes going under Indonesian rule; a stark contrast to thieir high hopes during the period immediately before the Indonesian invasion. Not surprisingly this inability to get aid into East Timor has led member agencies to take an increasingly critical stand towards both the Indonesian and Australian governments. There are those who would argue that this critical stance is the reason for the Indonesian government not allowing any of the aid agencies into the disputed territory. Before explaining why I think this view is wrong I shall spend some time looking at *why* so many of the voluntary aid agencies in Australia have taken a stand on East Timor which is so strongly opposed to that of the government and which has brought them into such opposition to the government of Indonesia.

It is not generally realised how far back the involvement of some of ACFOA's member agencies in the Timor question goes. For example in 1968 the National Union of Australian University Students (now the Australian Union of Students) commissioned a report on Portuguese Timor which was published in its newspaper *National U* on July 22 1968. At that time scarcely anyone in Australia knew that the Portuguese colony of Timor existed. Among those who did know of Timor were a group of former Australian commandos who had fought there during the second world war, the survivors of the 2/2 and 2/4 independent companies. In 1971 they planned a return visit which eventuated in 1973. They visited again the mountainous country where in 1942-43 they had fought a guerilla war against the Japanese for 18 months with the support of Timorese while the Portuguese administration had officially remained neutral. Many of those former Australian commandos formed some firm friendships with Timorese during that return visit and some of them were later to become active in Australia in trying to ensure a better future for their wartime allies.

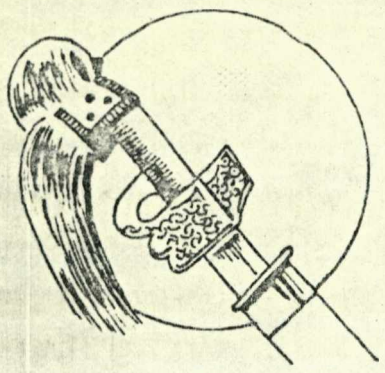
In the early 1970s Portugal's African colonies were somewhat better known in Australia than the one on our doorstep. Both Liberal and Labor governments had supported UN resolutions calling on Portugal to allow self-determination for its colonies and the student and church wings of the anti-apartheid movement had given support to the World Council of Churches' Programme to Combat Racism which included financial grants to the anti-colonial movements FRELIMO in Mozambique and RAIGC in Guinea-Bissau. At this time also ACFOA was beginning to place a great deal of emphasis on 'Development Education', which for many of the agencies meant a fundamental re-examination of what they were doing both in the overseas aid field and within Aus ralia. It caused some of them to s their work in Australia informin public opinion as being as import as supporting projects overseas. made them look more closely at t causes of poverty and not just it effects and caused some members question who aid was being sent and for what. For example value which began to be more strongl emphasised were self-reliance, loc control, appropriate technology peoples participation in developm planning including the participati of women. Capital intensive proje heavily reliant on continued fore funding were criticised. Within Au ralia to some people it meant ado ing alternative lifestyles, for othe change of the formal education sy tem, for most involved in ACFO it meant campaigning politically support of people oppressed by racism, colonialism, or sexism addition to giving material assista The time when many of these ide came together for the first time w the January 1973 ACFOA Devel ment Education Conference.

I well remember being present that conference. During it we hea the news of the death of Amilca Cabral, leader of the PAIGC in Guinea-Bissau. For many partic pants it was the first time they ha heard of him, yet with the assista of a number of African students good discussion of Portuguese Co ialism took place. However I don recall any discussion of Portugue Timor; that had to wait a few months until May 15 when an art appeared on the front page of t *Australian Financial Review* alle

that Australian companies BHP and TAA could be breaking UN resolutions, which the Australian government had supported, by being economically involved in a Portuguese colony, Timor. The same article pointed out that TAA was flying Portuguese troops to Dili. Some days later a number of ACFOA member agencies, in particular Action for World Development and World University Service, issued statements calling for the cutting of all economic ties with the Portuguese colony of East Timor. The issue of Portuguese colonialism came more prominently to the fore later that year when the visit of a 40-member delegation from the Portuguese Export Promotion Board was scheduled. Following strong condemnation of the tour by some Catholic Bishops the Australian government forbade the Department of Overseas Trade to have any dealings with the delegation but did not cancel the tour.

Inside Timor the underground group of Timorese opposed to Portuguese rule heard news of all these events on Radio Australia but did not have any contacts in Australia as they were too afraid of the power of the Portuguese secret police and of being deported to another colony which was the penalty for involvement in politics. Thus before any of them had met a single Timorese and before any political parties had been formed in East Timor, a number of NGOs had a position in support of independence, or at least self-determination, for the East Timorese. Indonesia's policy, enunciated in April 1972 by Adam Malik, was that if there was a liberation movement in Portuguese Timor Indonesia would support it, if the indigenous people wished this.

Another set of concerns which arose out of the emphasis on *Development Education* was increased discussion of the development strategy being pursued by the Suharto government in Indonesia. This is the strategy which Herb Feith, in an article in a special issue of *Development News Digest* devoted to Indonesia in May 1973 referred to as the 'World Bank style of development' with its assumptions that wealth in the cities would 'trickle-down' to the rural areas. Particularly those who had worked in Indonesia seemed to doubt that this strategy was appropriate and there were other worries about Indonesia too. In 1973 Amnesty International published extensive documentation showing



that Indonesia had more political prisoners than any other country in the world and when former Indonesian political prisoner Carmel Budiardjo visited Australia in early 1974 some information was leaked to her that the Australian army had been training Indonesian officers in interrogation techniques at Woodside in South Australia. This became the subject of an ABC *Four Corners* programme which the Minister did not deny, saying it was 'for tactical purposes only' and sparking off a huge debate about Australian relations with Indonesia not only in the aid agencies but in political parties, churches, trade unions and the media. This debate was still raging when the Armed Forces Movement coup in Portugal overthrew the Caetano regime and brought the promise of change to East Timor.

Fretilin expectations

The first political party to be formed in Portuguese Timor following the coup was the Social Democratic Association. A number of its members had been in the clandestine anti-colonial movement including Jose Ramos Horta, who made a visit to Jakarta in mid-1974 with the intention of gaining support for the independence of East Timor from the Indonesian government. The letter he received from Adam Malik promising that 'whoever will govern in Timor in the future after independence, can be assured that the Government of Indonesia will always strive to maintain good relations, friendship and co-operation for the benefit of both countries' is well known. He hoped to obtain a similar one from Australian authorities.

On his first visit to the southern states of Australia Ramos Horta went first to the office of Action for World Development to thank them for the statements AWD had made in 1973 against Portuguese colonialism and to try to enlist further supp for Timorese independence. Bec of the way things were going i Africa ASDT, which later beca FRETILIN, envisaged trying to support from Indonesia and Au ralia to help them gain independe from Portugal, not, as has turned to be the case, asking Portugal f assistance in gaining independer from Indonesia. The model of t European groups in solidarity w the liberation movements in th Portuguese African colonies was much in the minds of the FRETI leaders in those early days. The movements, particularly in Holl Sweden, Denmark, Norway an Britain and often with financia assistance from Social Democra governments and Churches, had p vided extensive medical, educatio and agricultural assistance to th movements which were, by 197 administering large areas of terr tory which they had liberated m tarily from the Portuguese. Wher was discovered that the left in Au ralia had no such experience FRETILIN turned to some of th voluntary aid agencies in ACFOA

Given 400 years of Portugue neglect the needs of East Timor f development aid were pressing. early 1975 most people in FRET IN believed that independence co come about in a peaceful manne the main needs being to reform a culture, increase educational pro ion massively, decolonise the adm istrative structure, begin some sm industries related to primary pr ducts produced in Timor e.g. coff processing, and take over from t Portuguese the leases for oil explo ation which had been let to Aus ralian, US and French companie They expected the Portuguese t complete some major capital wo e.g. road building and bridge rep before finally leaving. The FRE TILIN leaders envisaged Timore students coming to Australia f higher and technical training, inst of studying in Portugal and or Ramos Horta's first visit to Can berra he sought advice on how t lobby the Australian government scholarships.

FRETILIN was not the only p in East Timor to send delegations Australia and Indonesia. The UD party which initially wished to s with Portugal but which later opt for independence also sent memb to Australia where they made contact with the RSL and some the former commandos who had fought the Japanese in Timor duri

the Second World War. APODETI, the party which was for integration with Indonesia also had its contacts in Australia.

Enter Indonesia

By late 1974 interest was mounting in various circles in East Timor. The meeting in Jogjakarta in September 1974 at which President Suharto and Prime Minister Whitlam agreed that 'an independent Timor would be an unviable state and a potential threat to the region' certainly galvanised a few people into action, in Australia as well as in Timor. In Sydney a Campaign for an Independent East Timor was formed with support coming mainly from the Trade Unions and the Peace Movement. It planned to send a delegation to East Timor in 1975. In Melbourne Action for World Development held meetings with like minded organisations on East Timor and the Australian Union of Students sent Grant Evans to Timor to write and take photos for a booklet on the subject.

One day in mid-February 1975 the front pages of all the dailies in Australia had lead stories announcing that Indonesia was about to launch an armed invasion of Portuguese Timor. While the origin of these headlines is somewhat obscure they changed the nature of the debate about East Timor. Support for the independence of East Timor ceased to be just a question of supporting an independence movement struggling against Portuguese colonialism; it became an issue in Australian-Indonesian relations. The following day, as I interviewed a representative of the Australian Foreign Affairs Department in Dili, I sensed that Australian policy was on the way to a major clash with Australian public opinion. The government's aim was to help give legitimacy to anything the Indonesians may wish to do in Timor, while at the same time trying to deter them from doing it too violently. The NGOs, on the other hand, including many ACFOA member agencies, were increasingly looking for ways to practically give help to the process of decolonisation in East Timor and to ensure that the Timorese could exercise the right to self-determination which most of them believed in. As time went by the only way to do this was by working with FRETILIN.

The Fretilin Programme

John Birch, NSW Committee member of Community Aid Abroad who accompanied the Trade Union and Student delegation to East Timor in March 1975, told an interviewer for the Sydney University students newspaper *Honi Soit* in April 1975:

"FRETILIN is the party that is extending its interests and its influence into the outer villages and into the mountains. The other parties are staying very much in the main centres. FRETILIN is the party which has gone out to spread itself right out over the island and the party which, I think, is closest to the aspirations of the Timorese people . . . They certainly see agriculture as their main problem – the need to expand agricultural production. They see education as being a problem and FRETILIN has begun adult literacy programmes using Paulo Freire's methods in the villages of Baucau. At present they see their main problem as to obtain their independence, their national sovereignty."

I well remember some discussions in Timor between John and some of the members of FRETILIN's agricultural committee. They hoped to import tractors to pull ploughs and bring under cultivation some of the vast uncultivated lands. John Birch pointed to the large number of buffaloes which were wading around in the paddy fields stirring up the wet soil, and suggested that if they were harnessed to ploughs this would avoid the need to import tractors and save a great deal of fuel which would also need to be imported. They seemed quite impressed by this suggestion and tried to work out other innovations which would encourage self-reliance.

I think what impressed members of Action for World Development and CAA about FRETILIN was that its members were not simply content to put reliance in political power by campaigning for the elections which the Portuguese were organising, in addition they seemed to be making a start on some of the tasks, e.g. organising co-operatives, setting up adult literacy classes which would be required to transform the economy from a colonial one. In many ways FRETILIN embodied those values which these particular agencies strove for. Their requests were modest, their aspirations were for an economy based on agriculture, use of appropriate technology, meeting basic needs, 'conscientisation' type educational projects, preventive medicine and rural health care, a tourist industry based on local resources and opposition to domination of the economy by foreign multi-nationals. As East Timor was a small country with a population of only 650,000 people, with a reasonable level of foreign exchange from coffee and oil, many of the people in Australian voluntary aid agencies saw a bright future for it, so long as its independence and security could be guaranteed.

It would be wrong however to suggest that most of the ACFOA member agencies were pro-FRETILIN; they were not. Most took no political stand at all in relation to East Timor until after August 6, 1975 when the UDT launched a coup against the Portuguese administration sparking off a civil war in which FRETILIN was victorious. The 1975 ACFOA Annual Council, meeting just 17 days after the coup, when refugees were streaming into Darwin, carried a resolution calling on the Australian government to express its support for the principle of 'independence of choice' for the people of East Timor, and opposition to external influence on the territory. In addition the government was requested to offer facilities to mediate in the conflict, to re-establish its consulate in Dili and, on the restoration of normality, to provide development assistance. This was the first public statement by ACFOA on the question of self-determination for East Timor. It was supported by all those present with the exception of the Australian Red Cross Society. While falling short of FRETILIN's policy of independence it was not welcomed by the Australian gov-

Support for the independence of East Timor ceased to be just a question of supporting an independence movement struggling against Portuguese colonialism; it became an issue in Australian-Indonesian relations . . . Australian policy was on the way to a major clash with Australian public opinion.

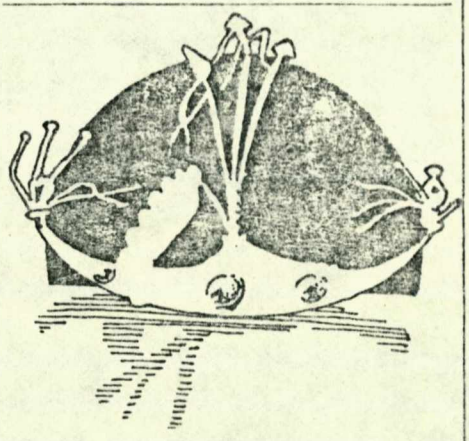
ernment and none of the requests were carried out.

Aid Agencies in Timor, 1975

The first aid agency into East Timor after the civil war was not an ACFOA member but a newly created organisation calling itself ASIAT, Australian Society for InterCountry Aid – Timor. Sydney pediatrician John Whitehall, who founded ASIAT together with Michael Darby, managed to land on the beach in Dili by means of a fishing boat chartered by Channel 9 journalist Gerald Stone and press magnate Kerry Packer. Gerald Stone has described in *The Bulletin* September 8, 1975 some of the difficulties they had avoiding the transport blockade which the Australian government was trying to impose in Darwin. Although some of the ACFOA member agencies were at first a little wary of ASIAT, partly for its unorthodox methods and also because its founder, Michael Darby, was best known for his right wing politics, FRETILIN was full of praise for its medical work and later some of its doctors co-operated with FRETILIN in training health workers.

The day after Dr Whitehall began work in the Dili hospital a delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross arrived to carry out emergency treatment of war victims, set up a tracing service for people to find relatives lost in the war and to visit prisoners of war being held by FRETILIN troops. On September 26 at a consultation in Melbourne convened by ACFOA on 'Timor and Australian NGO's' representatives of both ASIAT and ICRC reported on their activities. In addition the meeting heard a report from a Parliamentary delegation consisting of Ken Fry and Senators Arthur Gietzelt and Neville Bonner who had been into Timor since the coup and civil war. All reported that there had been much less killing than was believed, that the territory was in a relatively peaceful state and that FRETILIN-held prisoners were being treated in a reasonable manner, pending the return of the Portuguese administration to bring them to trial. ASIAT was carrying out some long-term pediatric health care work as the emergency receded.

The consultation urged ACFOA to set up a 'Task force' on East Timor and this was done at the October 3 executive meeting. The first action of the Task Force was to appoint an investigating team to go immediately to East Timor to survey both the urgent and the long-term needs of the territory and to make recommendations as to the possible role of Australian voluntary agencies. The team consisted of Mark Raper of the Jesuits' Asian Bureau Australia, John Mavor of the Australian Council of Churches, Neill O'Sullivan of CAA and Jim Dunn, a former Australian Consul in Portuguese Timor. The four flew into Dili on October 16 and travelled extensively throughout East Timor over the next couple of weeks, meeting a great variety of people including the FRETILIN central committee, the Timorese Women's Organisation, the Economic Commission headed by the country's only trained economist Dr Jose Gonzalves, the Catholic Bishop Jose Ribeiro and the Portuguese Governor Lemon Pires (who by that time had retreated to the offshore island of Atauro).



The main conclusions reached by the team were that "the two greatest humanitarian needs at that time were the restoration of peace in the vicinity of the Indonesian border and the urgent need to reduce the threat of widespread bloodshed that would result from a full-scale attack on East Timor." They recommended long-term assistance to agriculture, health care and education and drew up a 'shopping list' for immediate dispatch including goods such as grain, milk powder, medical supplies, caustic soda (for soap manufacture), textiles to be made into clothing by members of the Womens Organisation, seeds for immediate planting and petrol to enable the distribution of these goods to regional centres. In addition they requested three Australian technicians in the fields of general agriculture, animal husbandry and diesel engineering to volunteer for two-year assignments. The team also agreed to make efforts to find a market for that year's c of coffee. Their report included detailed assessment of the polit situation in East Timor and a stu of FRETILIN's policies in the ar of agriculture, health, education the long-term economic develop of the territory.

Three members of the team sented their report at a secon ACFOA Timor consultation on ober 30. The fourth member, J Dunn, stayed in Timor monitor the political situation there. A T Relief Appeal was launched that by a number of agencies. Howe the needs of the Timorese were overshadowed at that time by a other disturbing event, the disap ance of two television teams fr Australia somewhere near the bo with Indonesian Timor. At th launching of the Timor Relief ap Mark Raper told an *Age* reporte he had heard Francisco Lopez Cruz of the UDT speaking on Ra Kupang from within Indonesi territory, telling the Timorese lis ers 'We killed the Australian co munist journalists and we'll kill others that come along'. A tape this broadcast was given to the A ralian Department of Foreign Af but so far they have never publ acknowledged Indonesia's respo bility for the deaths. Indeed th event has had a major effect on t attitude of all journalists to the nesian and Australian governme Not only are journalists aggriev that their colleagues were shot cold blood under Indonesian or but the fact that they could ne report this in daily newspapers to the Australian government's notice system has angered them siderably. For as Laurie Oakes w in the February 1978 issue of t Australian Journalists Associat paper, *The Journalist*: "Indone messages were intercepted by t Defence Signals Division (now Defence Signals Directorate) wit hours of the attack on Balibo. messages reported that the news had been killed by Indonesian tr and their bodies burnt."

Timor Relief Appeal

The Timor Relief Appeal ba by the Australian Council of Ch es, Australian Catholic Relief, A care, the Freedom from Hung Campaign and Community A Abroad raised about $160,000. November 12 a barge, the *Alan Fay*, left Darwin loaded with

goods which the investigating team had requested. There was however some problem with the fuel for distribution. The Australian government was arguing that to export petrol to East Timor at that time could be construed by the Indonesian government as military support for FRETILIN, so they did not allow the full amount to be taken. Mark Raper and CAA member Bob Richards accompanied the *Alanna Fay* and on arrival in Dili met up with the members of the independent foundation which had been set up to oversee emergency relief. This consisted of a representative of the FRETILIN Economic Commission, a representative of the Bishop of Dili together with a representative of ACFOA. Australian journalist Jill Jolliffe described in *DND* No. 15 how she accompanied a consignment of rice to Maubisse in an ancient truck.

"As the truck swung into the village square our hearts sunk – we were greeted by about one thousand whooping Maubisse people and our concern for an orderly distribution looked ill-fated. It was however, merely a typically passionate Timor welcome and the machinery of local government was swiftly activated. Members of the regional sub-committee (mainly young school teachers) set up desks at various points around the square and called names from revised census lists . . . Villagers came up to the scales bearing plastic bags, blankets, and even battered straw hats to collect their kilo of rice. Afterwards they performed lovely spontaneous Maubisse songs and dances in the square, celebrating the coming of the rice."

In her book, *East Timor: Nationalism and Colonialism*, Jill describes how also at Maubisse the ground had already been dug to plant the seed which arrived as part of the ACFOA consignment and how the Womens Organisation was running a creche and an aged infirmarian running a 'medical school' in the evenings at which he imparted his knowledge of health care. This was a period in which members of the ACFOA agencies worked closely with the FRETILIN administration and also with Church leaders, nuns and priests in East Timor, for the Catholic Church was very strong in the territory. When the *Alanna Fay* left Dili it had on board a cargo of coffee which FRETILIN had managed to process and sell to a Sydney buyer for $40,000. The money was deposited in an account in the Darwin branch of the Commonwealth Bank to be used to import food and other necessities as required by the Timorese administration.

All visitors to East Timor at this time commented on the enthusiastic, if inexperienced, way in which FRETILIN was tackling the development problems of the territory, how they did not appear to be using aid as a political weapon nor to be concerned only with feeding their own members. Neil O'Sullivan of CAA went as far as saying in an interview on his return from Timor that he thought FRETILIN's development policies in East Timor had a greater chance of success than those of any other country in South East Asia. But general enthusiasm for the events in East Timor by some Australian voluntary agencies was tempered by fear for the worsening political situation. On 28 November FRETILIN gave up waiting for the Portuguese to return and negotiate and independence was declared unilaterally. The International Committee of the Red Cross was still trying to get a guarantee of respect for their neutrality from the Indonesian Government. When the ICRC team had arrived in August they had received such a guarantee from both the parties to the civil war, FRETILIN and UDT. In November the ICRC decided that guarantees were necessary from four parties, FRETILIN, UDT, APODETI and Indonesia. FRETILIN was the only party from which they could get such a guarantee. The UDT and APODETI representatives could not be contacted, and Indonesia refused. Without a recognised neutral zone from which to operate in the case of a war they would have to evacuate. According to Jill Jolliffe, who was in East Timor at the time, the absence of a neutral zone was the determining factor which made most Australians in Timor, who were mainly journalists and aid workers, decide to leave on December 2. Only one Australian journalist, Roger East, stayed behind in order to report events to the outside world.

Unfortunately for the Timorese that request (for aid) has not to this day been able to be responded to. But the aid agencies have not stopped trying in their aim to do what they think will enable the Timorese people to achieve self-determination and development.

Indonesia severs the links

As is well known the Indonesian army launched its military attack on Dili in the early hours of December 7. In Darwin a number of journalists and aid people heard the voice of Alarico Fernandes, secretary of FRETILIN coming across the Red Cross Radio:

"The situation in Dili is worsening. Indonesian forces are executing people, all children and Chinese. Request immediate aid. They took civilian refugees from Churches and executed them. FRETILIN forces are still fighting and controlling two-thirds of Dili. Enemy forces are still supported by warships and war planes. An urgent evacuation of women and children is badly needed. We are running out of food and medicine. Please give us assistance as quickly as possible. Our position will be pointed as soon as we get your reply."

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On the evening of December 7 in Melbourne 300 people packed a small hall and listened to David Scott of CAA, one of the last Australians in Timor, accuse the Australian Government of conniving with the Indonesian Government to make sure all foreign observers were out of Timor before the invasion. He also accused them of criminal neglect for failing to try and negotiate a neutral zone for ICRC. An Australia-East Timor Association was formed with Bill Roberts of AWD as President. $1000 was raised that night to help send David Scott to the UN to lobby in support of Timorese independence.

At an ACFOA executive meeting just one week after the full-scale Indonesian invasion of East Timor the ACFOA executive called on the Australian Government to help

establish a neutral zone for refugees and relief distribution in East Timor, to call on all parties to observe the Geneva conventions, to insist that the International Committee of the Red Cross be allowed to return to East Timor immediately and to offer facilities to enable refugees to be brought to Australia. No reaction to these requests was forthcoming from the Australian Government. The frustration of the aid agencies in not being able to continue their work in East Timor was expressed in the second resolution of the executive:

"Recognising the obstruction of aid programmes to East Timor through Indonesian intransigence, the Executive of ACFOA commends the Australian Government's action in suspending the delivery of two Nomad aircraft to Indonesia. We call for the further suspension of all military aid to Indonesia until such time as Indonesia has ceased its present intervention in East Timor."

This was the first time ACFOA had called for the suspension of military aid to any country. The resolution was supported by all but two executive members and received considerable press coverage.

Support continued

The period of close working together with FRETILIN and other Timorese by the aid agencies meant a great deal of frustration, anger and sorrow for those involved when they could no longer communicate with their colleagues inside East Timor. Work on behalf of the East Timorese after the invasion took a number of forms. For several months when there was the possibility that the blockade might be lifted there were plans to send shiploads of aid to various ports of East Timor. Groups planning to send ships ranged from the Catholic Bishops to a group of Trade Unions. Two boats attempted to leave from Darwin but were prevented from doing so by the Australian Navy. Another area of activity was that of human rights lobbying. This arose from Jim Dunn's visit to Portugal in January 1977 where he interviewed Timorese refugees in camps in Lisbon. Two striking aspects of his findings were, firstly the extremely violent events of the invasion which he reconstructed with the help of eye-witnesses, and second the appalling conditions in which Timorese were living in Portugal. Not officially refugees because of their Portuguese citizenship many of these people had applied to be reunited with family members in Australia. A number of ACFOA agencies have taken up this question of family reunions as a way of helping the Timorese community.

Others have taken up the international legal aspect e.g. the International Commission of Jurists Australian branch. John Dowd, of the NSW branch has been raising the issue in a number of international fora including the UN General Assembly. The events in Timor have also caused ACFOA itself to look more closely at Australia's military aid. In its submission to the Harries Committee ACFOA included a large section on military aid and still has the policy that military aid to Indonesia should be withdrawn as long as military activities are going on in East Timor.

The voluntary agencies have continued to press for the return of the International Committee of the Red Cross to East Timor, to carry out all aspects of its work as in August 1975. The Australian Government effectively dropped this demand from its policy when it gave financial aid to the Indonesian Red Cross in October 1976. ACFOA's most significant action in this campaign was the publication in July 1979 of the report *Aid and East Timor* which gave evidence of aid given through Indonesian Red Cross of being misused and which increased the pressure on the Indonesian Government to allow ICRC to return.

Another avenue of work in support of the Timorese which the voluntary agencies have taken up and which is extensively documented in this dossier is the work with the Timorese community in Australia. They see their most pressing need as family reunions. Through its support of the Timorese Committee f Permanent Residence in Melbour by paying the salary of its organise Joao Gonclaves, ACFOA and son of its agencies have become involved with helping Timorese circu vent the legal and bureaucratic dif culties entailed in bringing out re tives from Portugal or Timor. It i interesting to note that many of these Timorese were not FRETILI supporters in Timor, but are none theless resolutely opposed to the Indonesian invasion. One of them Fr Francisco Fernandes from Pert has recently been to the United Nations to take part in the debate before the general assembly.

ACFOA, along with other orga isations such as the Campaign for a Independent East Timor, Trade Unions, the Labor Party and othe political bodies has consistently ca paigned against the Australian reco nition of Indonesian sovereignty ov East Timor. This action, while som people may regard it as out of place for an aid agency is seen by all who support it as a logical outcome of t earlier work in East Timor of ACFOA and its member agencies. For example it was during the ACFOA Summer School in Hobart in January 1978 that the governme announced its de facto recognition Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor. The conference was interrupted while all but 10 of the 400 participants took part in a protest rally organised by the local East Timor committee in central Hobart. The participants of the Summer School sent a telegram to Malcolm Fraser, signed by almost all of them pointing out their disagreement wit this policy. One of the arguments given by the government for recogn ising Indonesian control was alway that it would facilitate the entry of emergency relief aid. Aid agencies are dubious about this argument as they have seen no sign on the part of the Indonesian Government to c operate with even the Internationa Red Cross and until the whole of th territory is opened up to outside observers, journalists as well as aid workers, they will not be satisfied that they can work properly in East Timor as voluntary agencies should giving the people inside the territory ultimate control over how aid is distributed and which aid is to come in As long as Indonesia maintains its claims over East Timor it is most un likely to let the Timorese run their own aid programmes and to collabo ate directly with the donors in Aust ralia. There is some difference of

The period of close working together with FRETILIN and other Timorese by the aid agencies meant a great deal of frustration, anger and sorrow for those involved when they could no longer communicate with their colleagues inside East Timor.

opinion among the agencies on this, some are content to try and work through channels in Indonesia e.g. with their counter part organisations in that country such as Churches. Others see this as acceding to the Indonesian Government's view that East Timor is part of Indonesia and would prefer to work directly with the Timorese and therefore hope to send their own representatives to Timor. But at the present moment all agencies, regardless of what they have said on East Timor, have been excluded.

Support broadly-based and united

An interesting question on the political aspect is, to what extent do the statements of the leaders of the aid agencies represent the views of the members and public opinion in general in Australia? Community Aid Abroad, which has a more developed structure of membership than most agencies, commissioned a study of its own working in 1977 by Louise Arnold of the Melbourne University Social Work Department. She found that 76 per cent of CAA members and supporters agreed that "the East Timorese have an inalienable right to self-determination and independence and must be permitted to exercise this right freely"; 74 per cent agreed that "unless Australia protests against Indonesian atrocities in East Timor, it can be seen as a nation without honour, principle, or courage." The percentages of national committee members and staff agreeing with these statements were even higher.

Political scientist Nancy Viviani, in the 1976 study "Australians and the Timor Issue" published in *Australian Outlook*, makes the observation that the groups opposed to the Indonesian invasion of East Timor "illustrated one of the enduring features of Australian opinion on Indonesian issues. They could not be charged with party bias or support . . . and indeed the group represented a powerful alliance of those of right, left and centre persuasion in Australian politics." Professor H.W. Arndt has claimed in an article in the December 1979 issue of *Quadrant* that ACFOA was at one time "captured by a left-radical group and for a time published extremist propaganda, including a good deal attacking the Suharto regime". If he was referring to the Timor issue it could hardly be said that most of those supporting self-determination for East Timor within ACFOA were on the left. For example Major General Cullen, an executive member of ACFOA, put his views strongly in the October 1977 issue of the *Pacific Defence Reporter;*

"Is it not an attribute of right wing patriots to wish for Independence and Peace – just as much as left wing patriots. After all the world recognises that the Act of Free Choice was not in the past independently supervised by the United Nations, indeed no real test of Timorese wishes appears to have taken place, and therefore the right of Indonesia to impose its rule on East Timor is neither final nor recognised as such by the majority of members of the United Nations."

While the most vocal support for the independence of East Timor has come from FRETILIN supporters, and those on the left, some of these have occasionally been surprised to find themselves joined in calls for Timorese self-determination by men with impeccable Liberal Party credentials, such as Richard Alston, (current ACFOA Chairman and President of the Victorian Liberal Party), John Dowd, (of the Australian Section of the International Commission of Jurists and NSW Liberal State MP) and Michael Hodgman, (Tasmanian Federal Liberal backbencher). Even further from the label 'left' are those advocates of Timorese independence associated with ASIAT and with the journal *Free Market* such as Michael Darby, John Whitehall and Bill Bancroft.

It could hardly be said that most of those supporting self-determination for East Timor within ACFOA were on the left.

Another important aspect of public opinion on the Timor issue, which Nancy Viviani points to, is that it has been more united on this issue than on any other concerned with Indonesia. The six groupings which she identifies are being part of this opinion, the Churches, the aid organisations, university people, the Trade Unions, journalists, and sections of the Labor Party she claims have intensified their co-operation on the Timor issue as the dispute progressed. I agree with this and I think that ACFOA has reached a whole new public and come to the notice of a number of audiences it would not have, had it not become involved in the Timor issue. For example increased co-operation between aid agencies and journalists has resulted to a large degree from contacts made at the time of the Indonesian invasion of East Timor or immediately before. The death of the six journalists and the fact that journalists as well as aid agencies are excluded from East Timor has given some journalists a new sense of identity with the aid agencies and more working relationships have evolved in relation to other parts of the world as well.

Finally Nancy Viviani also makes the point that opposition in the case of Timor is confined to the Indonesian Government and does not generally spill over into anti-Indonesian hostility. She points out that a distinction between the government and people of Indonesia is often clearly drawn by these groups and that no-one has suggested cutting off aid to Indonesia (apart from military aid). She also points out that it is motivated predominantly by concern for the rights of the Timorese people, not opposition to the Suharto regime. I think this is a much more accurate view than that of Professor Arndt who sees Australian opposition to the Indonesian Government's actions as some sort of racist anti-Indonesianism. Many of the people in the Trade Union movement who are active in support of the East Timorese will point out that it was those same Unions and in some cases those same individuals who supported the Indonesian struggle for independence against the Dutch.

It is as well to remember some of these events now as members of ACFOA agencies work out new strategies for their involvement with the Timorese people. For as Jim Dunn wrote in *The Bulletin* in January 1980:

"Is it really enough that we should confine ourselves to a Band-Aid operation and forget the events of the past. It seems to me that this approach to the Timor problem is too negative and that, in the long-term it will not help our relations with Indonesia. Obviously the Indonesian authorities would like us to stop talking about the situation in East Timor. An obliging silence would earn their gratitude, but would it earn their respect?" O

The United Nations and East Timor

ON 21 NOVEMBER 1979, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS ADOPTED THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION (34/40) ON EAST TIMOR:

'The General Assembly

Recognising the inalienable right of all peoples to self-determination and independence in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, contained in its resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960.

Bearing in mind the part of the Political Declaration adopted by the Sixth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Havana from 3 to 9 September 1979, relating to East Timor.

Having examined the chapter of the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples relating to the Territory.

Having heard the statements by the representatives of Portugal, as the administering Power, and of Indonesia.

Having also heard the statements by the petitioners, including the representative of the Frente Revolucionaria de Timor Leste Independent.

1. Reaffirms the inalienable right of the people of East Timor to self-determination and independence in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV).
2. Declares that the people of East Timor must be enabled freely to determine their own future, under the auspices of the United Nations;
3. Expresses its deepest concern at the suffering of the people of East Timor as a result of the situation now prevailing in the Territory;
4. Calls upon all parties concerned to facilitate the entry into the Territory of international relief aid in order to alleviate the suffering of the people of East Timor;
5. Requests the United Nations Children's Fund and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to render, within their respective fields of competence, all possible assistance to the people of East Timor, particularly the children and those seeking to leave for another country for purposes of family reunion;
6. Requests the Secretary-General to follow the implementation of the present resolution and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session;
7. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its thirty-fifth session, the item entitled 'Question of East Timor'.'

Voting on the resolution was as follows; For 62; Against 31; Abstentions 45.

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Barbados, Benin, Botswana, Brazil, Burundi, Byelorussia Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, China, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic Yemen, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Iceland, Iran, Jamaica, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Niger, Portugal, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Sweden, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, Ukraine, USSR, United Republic of Tanzania, Upper Volta, Vietnam, Zambia.

Against: Australia, Bangladesh, Chile, Columbia, Egypt, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Malaysia, Maldives, New Zealand, Oman, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sudan, Suriname, Syria, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, United States, Uruguay, Yemen, Zaire.

Abstaining: Argentina, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Belgium, Bhutan, Bolivia, Burma, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Federal Republic of Germany, Guatemala, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Ivory Coast, Kuwait, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Mauritania, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Romania, Samoa, Spain, Sri Lanka, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Cameroon, Venezuela, Yugoslavia.

Absent: Bulgaria, Comoros, Democratic Kampuchea, Djibouti, Dominica, Ecuador, German Democratic Republic, Libya, Malta, Mauritius, Poland, Solomon Islands, Somalia.

The Politics Of Aid To East Timor

by Pat Walsh

The queue of aid organisations waiting to help in stricken East Timor is a long one. But only two have been allowed in – the International Red Cross and Catholic Relief Services of the United States. This article offers an account and evaluation of their programmes. It concludes that ICRC has been severely compromised in its East Timor programme and that CRS is playing a 'subservient role' to the US and Indonesian governments.

ACFOA reported in July 1979 that East Timor was in the grip of a crisis of devastating proportions. Drawing on information originating inside East Timor, but unable to visit the territory to make its own assessment, ACFOA alleged a mounting death-toll due to continuing war, malnutrition and disease, and a massive displacement of people into problem-ridden, Indonesian controlled camps. The Indonesian Red Cross, the only permissible channel for overseas aid, was clearly not coping – despite Indonesian government assertions to the contrary – and aid intended to relieve the suffering was being misappropriated. Clearly a new and large-scale aid programme was required to avert further disaster.

The ACFOA report was not the first time such a statement of concern had been issued. Fretilin, the United Nations, International Red Cross, the Australian and American governments, and ACFOA itself had made repeated calls since 1976 for aid agencies to be admitted to East Timor. In September 1978 a number of foreign ambassadors, including those of Australia and the USA, visited East Timor and, appalled at what they saw, called for immediate international assistance.

Indonesia, still not in firm enough military control of the situation and wishing to convey the impression that all was 'normal' in Timor, rejected these appeals and insisted that it would accept aid only from sources which recognised its sovereignty over East Timor and which agreed to channel funds through the Indonesian Red Cross, the sole implementer of aid in the territory (with the exception of the small programme run by the local Catholic Church). Some governments complied with these conditions. For example, two bargeloads of materials were sent from Darwin to Dili late 1978-early 1979 by the Australian government on these terms, but World Vision who contributed to one of these consignments was forbidden even to hand over its goods in Dili. No foreign agencies were to be admitted, whatever the cost in lives and health to the Timorese.

Late in 1979, however, the Indonesian government moderated its hard-line and costly policy and two international aid agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Catholic Relief Services of the United States (CRS) were permitted to begin work in East Timor. Now that these agencies have been in Timor over six months and will continue their programmes for a further period – in the case of ICRC another six months, and for CRS much longer – it is time some account and evaluation of their work was attempted.

The International Red Cross in East Timor

The ICRC was finally re-admitted to East Timor in 1979, over three years after the Indonesian invasion in December 1975 had forced it to abandon the full range of works it had established there after the civil war earlier that year. ICRC surveys in April and July 1979 confirmed the worst fears carried in earlier reports. ICRC officials found that "tens of thousands of people displaced by military operations were facing starvation unless aid was brought to them rapidly, a situation aggravated by the absence of any medical service". Abandoning the low-keyed language normally employed in ICRC reports, officials declared the situation facing them was "as bad as Biafra and potentially as serious as Kampuchea". Photographs of hungry children taken in October at Laga by the Australian reporter Peter Rodgers and smuggled out of Indonesia for publication in Australia and abroad graphically confirmed these analogies.

In conjunction with Indonesian Red Cross, ICRC began a relief operation on October 19, 1979 directed at the 60,000 "most destitute" in eight centres. The programme did not, however, begin simultaneously, in these places. Natorbora, for example, did not begin receiving assistance until November 15 and two months elapsed before the programme got under way in Luro. The eight mountain villages were Hatolia, Uatulari, Dilor, Fatubessi, Laclubar, Matarbura, Iliomar and Luro most of which "contain people who have been chased from their homes in other parts of the island". The food and medical conditions of these people was "extremely alarming" and the condition of some 20,000 of these, some of whom were suffering from marasmus and would probably die, was "calamitous". The ICRC medical co-ordinator, Dr Pascal Grelletty, stated that "he had rarely been so distressed by what he had seen".

Logistics of ICRC Programme

The ICRC estimated its six-month rescue operation would require some 4200 tons of basic foodstuffs, 60,000 blankets, and quantit-

ies of soap and medicine. At the insistence of the Indonesian government, however, aid donated in kind to this programme had to go via Jakarta, not direct to Dili. This incredible condition was later partially modified when it became known that emergency aid for Timor donated by Australia had been left sitting on the docks in Jakarta for some six weeks due to a bureaucratic tangle. Once in Dili, aid was moved to three storage centres at Baucau, Ainaro and Maubisse. Transport to the inaccessible interior was mainly by helicopter and accounted for 49 per cent of the $7 million programme. Three ICRC personnel (a doctor, nurse and relief specialist) worked with some 34 Indonesian Red Cross people who included, by late January 1980, nine Indonesian doctors and 11 Indonesian male nurses all of whom resided in the villages.

To keep track of food distributions and medical treatment a system of coloured cards was introduced. About a third of the 60,000 receiving weekly rations (yellow card), were issued with a blue card entitling them to extra food because of their extremely under-nourished condition while some 500 who were seriously ill and needed daily medical attention held a red card.

The budget for the six-month operation has been completely covered and was provided mainly by Western governments and Red Cross societies. The Australian government allocated some $3 million and extended tax deductibility to a public appeal launched by the Australian Red Cross on November 7, 1979. The same privilege was denied a separate Australian joint agency appeal which was launched three weeks later.

Evaluation of ICRC Programme

All reports indicate the people are slowly responding to the IRC-ICRC programme. Officials estimated in late January that 5-10 people a month die in each village where they work, compared with 30-40 before. New sites are being considered for Red Cross attention once it is satisfied the standard of health and nutrition in the original centres has reached a suitable level.

Nevertheless progress remains painfully slow. On his return from a three-day visit to Timor in December, two months after the programme's commencement, the Secretary-General of Australian Red Cross, Mr Leon Stubbings, reported that the people were being kept "just above starvation" by the Red Cross and that many thousands would fall victim to starvation and disease if the Red Cross was to end its relief programme in the area. The recent announcement that the ICRC will stay in Timor for a further six months after April 15, the expiry date of its first programme, is further acknowledgment of the continuing gravity of the situation.

Serious limitations of ICRC Programme

The Red Cross programme leaves much to be desired for it is seriously limited in a number of ways. On the ground the operation is mainly an Indonesian Red Cross (IRC) exercise. Consistent with its earlier policy of excluding foreigners from East Timor, the Indonesian Government has allowed ICRC personnel only minimum involvement. The programme clearly depends on the quality and autonomy of the now 190 IRC personnel in the various centres. It is too much to expect that Dr Pascal Grellety and Yvonne, his nurse-wife, the only two ICRC officials full-time in Timor and both based in Dili, could personally supervise the day-to-day relief operation across a number of relatively inaccessible centres. Allowance has been made for this and a number of agreements have been struck covering the independent auditing of accounts and access by the ICRC relief delegate (Jakarta-based Mr Cedric Neukomm) to local IRC records.

Nevertheless reports continue to circulate that some aid, chiefly rice – according to refugees arriving in Lisbon, is being diverted for sale by the Indonesian military who, as the administrators of East Timor, control the Indonesian Red Cross. In this light calls by US Congressmen (including Lester Wolff of New York who led a Congressional Team on a brief visit to Timor in January this year), for more foreign aid personnel to be admitted to Timor make good sense from the point of view of both the donors and the recipients of aid. It is doubtful, however, whether the Indonesian Government will agree for the exclusion of foreigners is closely tied up with its wish to control the flow of information to the outside world and to be seen by the East Timorese as their prime benefactor and source of humanitarian aid.

Of much greater importance, however, are the limitations in the scope of the Red Cross programme. The agreement between ICRC and IRC signed in Jakarta on June 19, 1979 speaks only of food and medical care for newly displaced persons in a small number of centres. Why the Red Cross have been restricted to only eight centres is not clear.

ICRC compromise

What is clear, however, is that other traditional ICRC works such as prison visitation, tracing of missing persons, monitoring of Geneva conventions and family reunions have been conspicuously excluded from this particular operation. By contrast all these services were included in the ICRC programme some four years earlier in 1975 when under the Fretilin administration ICRC carried out the full range of its activities.

Indeed it seems that during the years 1976-79 the ICRC refused to re-enter Timor unless the Indonesian Government agreed to allow it to meet all its obligations. For example, an ICRC telex to Chris Santos, Fretilin's representative in Australia, reported in August 1977: "ICRC still negotiating with Indonesian Government, and Indocross for return to Timor. As ICRC conditions are not yet approved we have to postpone this project". The following year *The Age* reported on May 8, 1978:

Other traditional ICRC works such as prison visitation, tracing of missing persons, monitoring of Geneva conventions and family reunions have been conspicuously excluded from this operation.

"Indonesia has refused to allow the ICRC to resume the humanitarian work it was doing in East Timor before the Indonesian occupation . . . informed sources who have followed closely the negotiations between the ICRC and the Indonesian authorities on this sensitive subject say Jakarta has made it clear that resumption by the ICRC of its traditional works of visiting prisoners and extending assistance to the civilian population is out of the question". As there is every evidence that the full range of

ICRC services is required in Timor today, one is forced to conclude that the ICRC was left with little choice but to finally capitulate to Indonesian demands and resume its operation in East Timor on a strictly limited compromise basis.

The ICRC is being kept out of a number of areas of desperate need. Letters and reports from Timor have constantly referred to political prisons there, though their precise number and details about the numbers of detainees and their condition are not available. One report has spoken of three prisons in each of the 12 administration centres outside Dili and four in Dili, in all some 40 prisons. Many allegations of tortue have been made. Henry Kamm of the *New York Times* was told of four "concentration camps" or political prisons – two in Dili, one in Baucau and one near Maliana (28.1.80). He was told the prisoners were kept incommunicado. Amnesty International, which along with the International Commission of Jurists has been refused permission to visit Timor, recently claimed "several hundred prisoners . . . were underfed and held in dangerous conditions. It had received persistent reports of prisoners being beaten or tortured" *(The Australian* May 5, 1980). But when the ICRC was told of the existence of these prisons in October 1979, it could only reply "Unfortunately the agreement which was negotiated by the ICRC does not provide for prison visits. We had met with considerable reluctance on this point".

There are also frequent reports of executions without trial and missing persons. Those executed without trial range from Fretilin leaders to civilian families, including it seems resistance fighters who surrendered under the Presidential Amnesty in 1977. Many have simply 'disappeared'. There are still many Timorese in Australia who do not know the whereabouts of close relatives or indeed whether they are dead or alive. Amnesty International has recently written to President Suharto calling on him to help in allowing the International Red Cross to investigate these matters. The ICRC is well aware of these reports and its direct assistance has been sought in these areas on a number of occasions in recent years. Its current policy is not to get involved and to recommend that action be taken through other channels. As the ICRC wrote on October 5, 1979: "It is our impression that diplomatic pressure exerted on the Indonesian authorities, or a campaign to alert the international community may be of help to the concerned Timorese, but it is equally possible that these efforts may backfire on them".

The issues of free emigration from Timor and the enforced separation of Timorese families have been treated elsewhere in this issue of *Development Dossier*. Less than half of the small number of family members agreed on for reunion in Australia have been allowed leave East Timor.

As there is every evidence that the full range of ICRC services is required in Timor today, one is forced to conclude that the ICRC was left with little choice but to finally capitulate to Indonesian demands and resume its operation in East Timor on a strictly limited compromise basis.

The Jakarta-based ICRC relief delegate, Cedric Neukomm, is fully aware of this scandalous situation and acknowledges ICRC's traditional responsibilities in the matter. However, according to the Secretary-General of Australian Red Cross, Mr Leon Stubbings, who has discussed the matter with the ICRC, the ICRC is not involved "as the issue is considered too political". Mr Stubbings has pointed out to his colleagues, however, that "the ICRC is needed for the family reunion programme".

He might have added that the ICRC is also needed in the other human rights areas mentioned above. The appalling condition of the destitute the ICRC went into Timor to work for six months ago may well have justified a compromise at that point. But given that the ICRC has now established an effective modus operandi in Timor and is to stay another six months, it is time its programme was expanded to embrace others in Timor whose suffering is of a different kind but whose claims on its resources are no less compelling and real.

The American Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in East Timor

The CRS programme is by far the bigger of the two operations in terms of money, outreach, numbers of people assisted and duration.

The CRS programme has three stages: Sept-Dec 1979, Jan-April 1980; and May-Oct and beyond.

Stage I: Sept-Dec 1979

The CRS programme started as a six-month emergency exercise in September 1979 and focussed on reaching 240,000 of the most needy, malnourished people in the 150 resettlement sites and people in some other villages. The CRS Director in Jakarta at the time, Frank Carlin, an ex-US marine, said the general condition and degree of malnutrition was the worse he had encountered in 14 years experience.

CRS concentrated on emergency food aid, distributing five million kgs of CSM (high-protein corn-soya mix – because the people are mainly corn eaters) and 2 million kgs of rice. Average rations were 5.5 kgs per person a month, but in more critical areas 10-12 kgs per person were distributed with special emphasis on children under 10. Seeds, medical aid, clothing, soap and transport were also provided. 450 metric tons of corn and rice seed were distributed in time for planting.

Two mobile medical teams made up of Indonesian doctors (recruited from Diponegoro University in Semarang by Dr Suroyo a former Brigadier-General) and Indonesian nurses who were former army orderlies, worked in a number of villages until January. Doctors arriving at Laga in December (where Peter Rodgers took his photographs in October) found a medical post devoid of staff, furniture and medicine. They had to begin from scratch and organise everything themselves. Using a one-time medication regime devised by the Red Cross, they treated 6231 patients in three weeks averaging 293 a day. 1035 patients were seen for a second time averaging 52 a day. The main diseases treated were malaria, intestinal worms, enteritis, upper and lower respiratory tract diseases, malnutrition, and skin and eye diseases. People there were completely dependent on CRS food and, the doctors noted, there was a tendency for them to have diarrohea after eating it. Two battalions of Indonesian troops quar-

tered some distance from the town were supplied with their own water, food and medicine in their own camps.

About half of the CRS budget was spent on transportation. CRS operates a fleet of 32 trucks in East Timor, has chartered two large helicopters (from NUH, an Indonesian firm) and five ships. As Dili has an off-loading capacity of only 250 tons a day, CRS has used two 1000-ton capacity barges with tugs to take food and supplies directly from the ships before they reach port. Major distribution points for relief supplies are established outside Dili at Laga (north-east coast), Beaco (south-east coast) and Betaro (southwest coast). Pack horses were also used to distribute materials in mountainous areas.

Stage II: Jan-April 1980

In late December 1979, Patrick Hopkin, the acting-Director of CRS in Indonesia, wrote: "I can reaffirm that tremendous unmet needs for assistance still remain in many parts of East Timor". More food and increased medical care were singled out as the two most critical and immediate needs of the population. Some improvements had occurred but CRS identified these months preceding the harvest as critical for food and distributed another five million kgs. of food aid concentrating on 134,000 people "in very critical need of assistance". This group comprised 120,000 from stage one and "14,000 newly identified people not yet reached by CRS and ICRC". Medical care was also critical. Malaria is rampant in many areas and a large portion of the population suffered from upper respiratory and skin diseases, vitamin deficiencies, intestinal parasites etc. An additional 6-8 Indonesian-staffed, mobile medical teams were put into the field. Water buffalo (virtually all of which have been killed during the war), simple agricultural equipment and seeds were also identified as immediate needs.

Stage III: May-Oct 1980 and beyond

From May to October CRS plans to undertake a Food for Work programme to develop the local infrastructure such as roads and irrigation and help in reforestation efforts, while at the same time meeting continuing food needs.

The FFW programme will operate in seven (out of the total of 13) needy kabupatens – administrative districts – where 50 per cent of the average 10,000 families will have at least one family member enrolled on a project. A ration of 50 kgs will be provided to each worker – based on a family of five members. An agricultural development programme is also planned in one area of each of the seven districts. Eight medical teams will operate during this period. The expected total cost is SUS1.5 million. This overall project will form the first stage of an anticipated three-year rehabilitation programme worth some SUS10 million.

Evaluation of CRS Programme

No on the spot, independent assessment of the CRS programme is possible as, unlike Kampuchea, trained observers are not allowed into Timor for such a purpose. Reports indicate, however, that technically the programme has been vigorously and efficiently conducted (with one or two notable exceptions in the medical aid area) and that, though the revival of the people is slow and much remains to be done, many lives have been saved.

In other respects, however, the CRS programme is highly ambiguous. At first glance it would appear to be a "Catholic effort" as one journalist has described it, an a-political Church contribution based on Christian principles.

CRS: Instrument of US Foreign Policy

All the available evidence suggests, however, that this is not so. The CRS programme in East Timor is not a church operation, nor is it essentially the operation of a voluntary, independent agency. CRS is working as a sub-contractor to the US Government implementing a government-to-government programme on governmental terms. The programme is essentially an exercise in American foreign policy the purpose of which is to secure and complete the Indonesian takeover of an unwilling East Timor.

Indonesia – a strategically located, Muslim, anti-communist, oil-producing OPEC nation with the fifth largest population in the world – has assumed new importance for US foreign policy following the US defeat in Vietnam in 1975. It is not surprising then, that the US, from the time of Ford and Kissinger's visit to Jakarta only days before the invasion in 1975, has consistently provided key diplomatic and military support for the Indonesian take over of Timor, despite its declared commitment to human rights.

The governmental character of the CRS operation has been clear from the outset when Adam Malik, the former Indonesian Foreign Minister, announced the programme after discussions in Jakarta early in 1979 with the CRS Executive Director, Bishop Edwin Broderick of New York. Later that year in September, senior CRS officials, including Fr Robert Charlebois, the CRS-US Government liaison officer, accompanied US Ambassador Masters and US AID officials on a survey of the resettlement sites where CRS was to concentrate its relief efforts. It is not CRS itself (that is the Catholic Church) or proceeds from an appeal to the American people which are financing the programme. The bulk of the aid is coming from the US Government one of the Indonesian Government's strongest supporters and its principal supplier of arms. Of the $US7.2 million spent by CRS in Timor up to December 1979, $US6,969,662 was a direct contribution (in funds and commodities) from the US Government. And US AID has already announced it intends to support any further requests it receives from CRS in the future.

This strong link with the US Government is a standard feature of CRS' general operation. CRS is financially dependent on the US Government for survival and others of its overseas programmes have mirrored US foreign policy in the past. In 1962 it drew 82 per cent of its budget from the US Government and its Executive Director, at the time, Bishop Edward Swanstrom, was well-known for his enthusiasm

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for promoting US national interests abroad. In 1978, $179 million of its $257 million budget came from the Government. And the US Episcopal Conference whose executives are ultimately responsible for CRS privately admit it is a 'runaway agency' which has failed to consult on important issues such as foreign politics.

The governmental character of the programme is also apparent from the Indonesian end. Though US Congressmen have called for an increase in foreign personnel, none of the 92 people working on the programme in East Timor are foreigners. The American CRS director is only permitted to visit from Jakarta at intervals. Furthermore, CRS is working through the Indonesian Government in East Timor, not the local church or any other agency. As the Secretary-General of Australian Red Cross observed after his visit to Timor in December 1979: "The Services (CRS) are working through government channels, therefore they did not have to set up a separate structure as did the Red Cross".

CRS co-operation with the US and Indonesian governments has extended even to the point of adopting without question their distorted analysis of the stituation in East Timor. The version of events in East Timor which CRS is circulating to other agencies around the world is as follows: "The withdrawal of the Portuguese in 1975 from East Timor and the subsequent incorporation of the area into Indonesia led to a civil war which displaced much of the population. Population is now estimated at 660,000. In 1977, due to the Government's general amnesty, the people began to return from the hills to seek assistance . . . Poor crops in 1978 and even drier 1978/79 growing season caused a major decrease in local food supplies". The account goes on to imply that the suffering CRS has responded to is the result of the general poverty of the Lesser Sundas.

This account of the reasons for the crisis in East Timor is a transparent falsification of the facts. They are well enough known to need only summary repetition here: the civil war preceded the 'incorporation'; Indonesia forcibly annexed East Timor by military invasion, it did not simply 'incorporate' it; this invasion – not the civil war – displaced 'much of the population'; the population now is at least 100,000, perhaps in excess of 200,000 short of 660,000; according to the 63-year-old Catholic priest Fr Leoneto do Rego who lived in the mountains of Timor until late 1978 it was Indonesian military activity which caused a major decrease in food supplies and consequent widespread starvation and disease and forced people down from the hills in search of relief; East Timor, as Indonesia itself, is a poor country because it has been economically mismanaged in the past. To make no mention of the Indonesian invasion and its attendant horrors, to blame the tragic condition of hundreds of thousands of people on their own in-fighting, and finally to suggest that the Indonesian Government's role has been a benevolent one, is nothing less than a sycophantic mockery of the truth and deserves the strongest possible condemnation.

The resettlement sites

However it is the nature of the *resettlement sites*, which are the focus of the CRS relief efforts, that reveals most clearly the ambiguity of this exercise.

CRS is concentrating its efforts on 150 'resettlement sites'. As the US Assistant Secretary of State, Richard Holbrooke, reported in December 1979: "We understand that CRS has reached over 75 per cent of the resettlement areas and that it is anticipated that 100 per cent will be reached by the end of December". These sites accommodate over 300,000 people, that is, well over half the population. They are new constructs and they represent the first stages of an Indonesian restructuring of East Timorese society. Many have been forced into these centres by war-induced starvation and the need to survive or by military command. People have not by and large returned to their own villages or life-style. For Elizabeth Traube, a Harvard-trained anthropologist who lived in East Timor for over two years until late 1974, these sites "clearly represent a break with long-term, traditional resettlement patterns, which were adapted to traditional means of subsistence". She stresses that today's conditions "are not the natural outcome of East Timorese environment, economy or demography. War is clearly the catalyst".

Neither are people free to move about or work as they would choose. They are confined to these centres. A February 1980 Indonesian church report states: "The bigger part of the people are still concentrated in population centres. They are not free to go far from the centres. Farming opportunities are restricted to the immediate neighbourhood of the population centres . . . the central districts provide good farming opportunities that, unfortunately, are not fully exploited". The Jakarta-based correspondent for the *London Observer*, Brian Eads, has also reported: "They are now confined to 'resettlement villages', each with its squad of Indonesian troops" (23 March 1980).

This re-structuring of East Timorese society is to be permanent. The US Embassy in Jakarta reported in September 1979: "It is difficult to distinguish how many people have been moved into the resettlement villages by the Government of Indonesia and how many of them have come into them on their own. The point is the people are now in these villages and the Government of Indonesia plans for them to remain there". This permanence is underlined by the special budgetary allowance the Indonesian Government has made for them. The opening of schools in these sites and the 'transmigrasi' of Indonesian peasants from other parts of the archipelago (East Timor has now been officially designated a transmigration centre) will further advance the Indonesianisation process the centres are designed to promote.

To involve one's organisation in this way is, at least objectively speaking, to make a direct contribution to the Indonesian subjugation of the East Timorese.

These centres, then, are both the products of Indonesia's military subjugation of Timor and the means of furthering that process. If people have been forced into them by one means or another, if they are not free to resume their traditional lifestyle and means of support, and if their confinement in them means they are short of food, it is clear they have been established for reasons other than the good of the people.

Their real purpose is twofold: it is to control the people and, in the

words of an Indonesian parliamentarian, "to separate the people from the terrorists" (that is, Fretilin). As a specialist in Timorese agriculture told the *New York Times* journalist Henry Kamm during his visit to Timor in January this year: "the plan had been drawn largely for strategic reasons, placing the population where the Indonesian army can control it". He went on to say that he approved "of the political objective of keeping the people out of the reach of Fretilin remnants".

By curbing Fretilin access to the people and vice-versa, this well-known and widely used counter-insurgency strategy is intended, on the one hand, to curtail the nationalists' sphere of influence and deny them the intelligence, morale, material support and recruits which are their life-blood, and, on the other, to permit the Indonesian military free access to the hearts and minds of the people. As the Jakarta-based correspondent for the *London Observer* expressed it: "teachers (are being) shipped in from Indonesia, with the officially stated aim of 'washing their brains' of Fretilin's nationalist ideology" (March 1980).

To make a long-term commitment to such sites and to work uncritically within them through Indonesian Government channels and with the full support of the US Government, as CRS is doing, has clear political and strategic consequences. There can be no doubt that to involve one's organisation in this way is, at least objectively speaking, to make a direct contribution to the Indonesian subjugation of the East Timorese. It is to ignore the just aspirations for independence of a determined and courageous people and to take the side of the more powerful protagonist in an on-going struggle.

The exercise is also suspect as an aid and development programme. The sites are inherently contradictory for they cannot serve as centres of development and self-sufficiency when their main purpose is to control the population and thereby deny them freedom of movement and work. In fact as the agricultural specialist interviewed by Kamm commented: "the resettlement project will make East Timor permanently dependent on food imports".

Finally, it should be noted that CRS is no stranger to the counter-insurgency, population control function of the 'strategic centre'. In 1967 and again in 1976 sections of the US press accused CRS of working as an instrument of US foreign policy by helping the US military effort in South Vietnam. A number of specific charges were made and included the allegation that the US military "built CRS into its refugee programme" which involved forcing large numbers of civilians out of their villages and farms into refugee camps for reasons of military strategy. These camps were then supplied by CRS. The CRS Vietnam operation at the time was directed by Father Robert Charlebois. Charlebois now handles negotiations between CRS and the US Government for government funding of CRS projects and accompanied senior US government officials on a tour of resettlement sites in East Timor late last year.

Exclusion of other agencies

Only two foreign aid agencies have been admitted to East Timor and both are currently conducting their programmes there on objectionable Indonesian Government terms. All other agencies have been excluded despite the fact that some have money specifically earmarked for East Timor and acknowledge their responsibilities to the territory. In recent months many have made requests to visit and/or work in Timor, only to be turned down by the Indonesian Government. These include UNICEF, the Indonesian Council of Churches and Indonesian Bishops Conference, the Australian Council of Churches, Austcare, Australian Catholic Relief, the Freedom from Hunger Campaign (Australia), and Oxfam London.

ICRC and CRS have both said there are tremendous unmet needs in East Timor and no danger of duplication were other agencies to come. The United Nations and several US Congressmen have called for international agencies to be allowed in.

More importantly the situation itself seems to require the expertise and resources of additional agencies. On May 1, 1980 *The Age* carried an earlier report from the *London Observer* based on interviews conducted in Jakarta which said in part: "Progress has been made, 'They are not dying like they were when we arrived five months ago', said one relief worker. The observation is relative. People continue to die from acute malnutrition and vitamin deficiency. But neither the CRS nor the ICRC teams are allowed sufficient access to make meaningful assessments of how far their emergency aid has cut death rates. Perhaps the most telling observation came from an official who had recently visited Cambodia. By the criteria of distended bellies, intestinal disease and brachial parameter – the measurement of the supper arm – the East Timorese are in a worse state than the Khmers".

Church sources confirm this general picture. They reported in February that though "general conditions are improving the process is extremely slow and that as long as military operations continue the rehabilitation process will be badly hampered". In the opinion of these sources big food supplies imported by CRS and ICRC have been insufficient and a full-scale food programme will be required about June once the limited returns from the corn harvest have been consumed. A number of starvation areas have been identified mainly in the eastern districts: Lospalos, Laga, Quelicai, Venilale, Uatolari, Uatocarbau, Hatolia, Maubara. Elsewhere for various reasons individual families are not getting enough food. The number of people involved may run into the thousands. The Church assessment adds that shortage of food and inadequate diet have caused physical weakness and have lessened resistance. As a result malaria, TB, cold/flu, typhoid, fever, diarrhoea, infections, rheumatism are taking a big toll. Though there is an acute and urgent need for housing, priority must still be given to food and agricultural equipment. Orphans and unaccompanied children, it concludes, remain a serious problem.

Appeal to the agencies

The Indonesian Government has rejected out of hand offers of help from a broad range of aid agencies concerned about the situation in East Timor. Is this to be the last word?

The first responsibility of aid agencies around the world is to the people of East Timor. At the very least these agencies must seek to visit East Timor and undertake a fresh assessment of the people's needs and the suitability of existing programmes. They must know, however, that only a vigorous and united effort will achieve this.

But their responsibilities go further. At the same time they must raise with their colleagues – ICRC and CRS – the nature of their current programmes in East Timor and question the propriety of giving aid without justice. O

East Timor : how many people have died?

East Timorese believe between 100,000 and 300,000 people have died in East Timor in the last four years. Recent official Indonesian population figures for the territory appear to support these claims. This article is a summary of the February 1980 issue of *Timor Information Service*, which concluded that between 133,000 and 217,000 people (that is, between one fifth and one third of the population) are unaccounted for in East Timor. Detailed sourcing is provided in the original material. This summary was produced by T.I.S.

Since the first days of the Indonesian invasion of East Timor in December 1975, there has been a steady flow of information indicating a large and increasing death toll in the territory. Less than one year after the invasion, church sources in Dili estimated that the number of people killed may have reached 100,000. By the latter half of 1979, Timorese church sources were saying in private conversation that at least 100,000 and perhaps as many as 200,000–300,000 East Timorese have died since the invasion began.

These estimates are not based on population counts. They arise from observations of people who have lived in East Timor during four years of war. The estimates are supported by the many reports from other Timorese (both Fretilin and non-Fretilin) of widespread killing in the early period of the invasion. The findings of an International Red Cross (ICRC) survey in July 1979 and Australian journalist Peter Rodgers in October, back up the 1979 ACFOA report "Aid and East Timor" which showed that a large proportion of East Timor's population was in an emergency situation and many had died of disease and starvation in the countryside and in Indonesian controlled 'refugee' or 'resettlement' camps.

Reports by East Timorese on the number of deaths in their country were given credence in October 1979 when Peter Rodgers calculated that the population had declined by about 100,000. Rodger's estimates were based on official population figures released by the Indonesian-controlled Provincial government in Dili. In fact, Rodgers appears to have underestimated the number of deaths these figures may indicate.

How many people are missing?

The official Indonesian figures supplied to Rodgers in October 1979 put East Timor's population at 522,433. The exact population of East Timor before the invasion is not known but according to official Portuguese and East Timor church figures, it was in the range of 663,000–700,000 in 1975. The short civil war in East Timor during August/September 1975 effectively caused a 7,000 decrease in population (4,000 refugees who never returned and up to 3,000 deaths – see discussion below). If we subtract this number from the 1975 population figures, we are left with a population in East Timor, after the civil war but before the invasion, of 656,000–693,000.

Comparing those figures with the 523,000 figure supplied to Peter Rodgers, the population in 1979 appears to be about 133,000–170,000 less than it was in 1975 before the invasion. However, there are three obvious reasons why we cannot conclude that this is the number of people who have died since the invasion:

- It is not clear how accurate the Indonesian population estimate actually is. In June 1979, a Timorese source was provided with some official figures which, when totalled, put the population at 523,000, almost the same as that given to Rodgers in October. The June figures, provided on a district by district basis were almost all "rounded-off" to the nearest thousand and, more questionably, eight of the districts were shown to have a population of exactly 30,000 (see map). If the figures supplied to Rodgers were these same June figures, there must be some doubt about their accuracy.
- A population census by Indonesian authorities would include only those East Timorese directly accessible to the Indonesian government. When Rodgers was provided with the population figures, he was also told by Indonesian military officials that there were 300-600 "Fretilin members" in the Eastern part of the territory. Given the Indonesian government's record over the last four years of drastically understating the number of Timorese outside their control, there would certainly be many more than 300-600 people not included in the population count. Until it is known how many East Timorese were *not* counted, it is impossible to determine from these official figures how many people have died.
- Subtracting the 1979 figure from the 1975 population figure to determine the number of missing East Timorese takes no account of births since 1975. In the 1950s and 60s, East Timor's population grew at a rate of 1.7 per cent per

year. If life in East Timor during the period 1975-79 had been close to normal, the population should have increased to about 700,000–740,000. Against this figure, the 1979 Indonesian population figures would indicate that 177,000–217,000 people were missing. However, there is no doubt that conditions in East Timor during 1975-79 were far from 'normal' but information on the effects of killings, starvation and disease on birth rates etc. is not available. Therefore, while it is currently impossible to quantify, 'population growth' after 1975 has to be taken into consideration.

What then, do the 1979 population figures show?

We have seen that there may be some doubt about the accuracy of the Indonesian government's 1979 population figure for East Timor (approx. 523,000). Whether or not it is accurate, if it is compared with the pre-invasion *1975* population level, it leaves 133,000–170,000 East Timorese unaccounted for. Although we are not able to quantify 'population growth' after 1975, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the actual number of 'missing' East Timorese is *at least* 133,000–170,000 and could be as high as 177,000–217,000. However, until we know how many East Timorese remain outside Indonesian control (and hence not counted in Indonesian population surveys), we cannot deduce from these figures alone, how many East Timorese have actually died since the invasion.

Why are Peter Rodgers' calculations an underestimate?

How is it possible to conclude that the number of people missing may be twice that calculated by Rodgers, given that we have used the same Indonesian population figure? The reasons are simple:

Firstly, Rodgers relies exclusively on Portuguese government figures for his 1975 population level. However, there is evidence that these figures underestimate the actual population because some Timorese avoided the Portuguese census counts in order to evade colonial taxes. For this reason, we have given the 1975 population as a range between the Portuguese figure (663,000) and Catholic Church estimates (700,000).

Secondly, Rodgers appears to give credence to reports that there may be as many as 25,000 East Timorese in West Timor, where they fled during the 1975 civil war. Rodgers has not seen these refugees, nor have there been any consistent first-hand accounts of their presence in West Timor since 1976. According to well-placed East Timorese, West Timorese and Jakarta church sources, most if not all refugees who went to West Timor in 1975 have returned to East Timor (with the exception of 1400 who went to Portugal in late 1976). Until the presence of East Timorese in West Timor is confirmed, Rodgers' use of them in calculations about population must remain doubtful and, for this reason, we have excluded them from our estimates.

The third reason why Rodgers' calculations are probably an underestimate is that he does not, as we have done here, take into account any 'population growth' after 1975.

More recent Indonesian population figures. Are they credible?

Even though Rodgers estimate of 100,000 deaths may be an underestimate, it is a shocking figure in any language. Not surprisingly, the Indonesian government has sought to prove Rodgers' calculations wrong, and has subsequently issued three new sets of population figures in as many months.

In November 1979, an Indonesian armed forces newspaper disputed Rodgers' report and claimed that East Timor's population was really 612,017. A month later, the East Timor military commander stated that the population was 592,603. Then, in January 1980, US Congressmen visiting East Timor were presented with a set of figures allegedly showing the population to be 598,603 (in fact, the figures provided totalled 589,782).

Why these three sets of figures are different from one another and so different from the figure of 523,000 supplied to Rodgers in late October 1979 as "the results of a survey that has just been carried out", remains unexplained. These recent figures are even more suspect when reports from East Timor in-